

A
S E R M O N

Preached before the Right Honourable the

L O R D - M A Y O R,

T H E

C O U R T of A L D E R M E N,

A N D T H E

L I V E R I E S of the several Companies of the C I T Y
of L O N D O N:

A T T H E

Parish-Church of St. LAWRENCE JEWRY, on the 29th of
September, 1779, before the Election of a Lord-Mayor.

By S A M U E L K E T T I L B Y, D. D.

Rector of Sutton, Bedfordshire, Vicar of St. Bartholomew the Less,
and Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Lord-Mayor.

L O N D O N:

Printed for JOHN, FRANCIS, and CHARLES RIVINGTON,
Nº 62, St. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD. 1779.

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1540/369

P L U M B E, Mayor.

Tuesday the 12th Day of October 1779, and in
the Nineteenth Year of the Reign of King
GEORGE the Third, of Great-Britain, &c.

IT is ordered, That the Thanks of this Court be given
to the Rev. Dr. KET TILBY, Chaplain to the Right
Honourable the LORD-MAYOR, for his Sermon preached
before this Court, and the Liveries of the several Com-
panies of this City, at the Parish-Church of St. Law-
rence Jewry, on Wednesday the Twenty-ninth Day of
September last, before the Election of a Lord-Mayor of
this City for the Year ensuing: And that he be desired to
print the same.

R I X.



To the Right Honourable

SAMUEL PLUMBE, Esq;

LORD-MAYOR of the City of LONDON.

My LORD,

THE favourable Reception which this well-meaning, though plain Discourse, experienced from those who heard it, encourages me to hope, that we are now returning to Moderation and Candour, to Temper and Unanimity. This Reflection heightens the Pleasure, I receive, from your public Approbation of my humble Endeavours to promote the Tranquillity and Welfare of this great Metropolis.

In

DEDICATION.

In the Goodness of my Intentions consisted my only Merit on this Occasion, and I should have thought myself amply rewarded by your Thanks alone, without your Injunctions to appear in Print ; but, urgent as they were, I deemed it my Duty to comply ; relying however, for Indulgence and Protection on the same good Motives which first recommended this Performance to the Favour and Acceptance of your Lordship and the Court of Aldermen.

I am, my LORD,

Your Lordship's most obliged,

and obedient Servant,

Nov. 4, 1779.

SAMUEL KETTLBY.

I TIM. ii. 1, 2.

I EXHORT THEREFORE THAT FIRST OF ALL, SUPPLICATIONS, PRAYERS, INTERCESSIONS, AND GIVING OF THANKS BE MADE FOR ALL MEN; FOR KINGS, AND FOR ALL THAT ARE IN AUTHORITY, THAT WE MAY LEAD A QUIET AND PEACEABLE LIFE, IN ALL GODLINESS AND HONESTY.

IT has been the constant Practice of all civilized Nations at least, upon every Occasion, in which the Happiness of the Community was interested, previously to assemble in Places consecrated to religious Worship, and there, before they proceeded on any Election or Determination, to invoke the Blessing of Heaven upon their Deliberations and Designs. And however mistaken they were in the Objects of their Vows and Addresses, antecedent to the Gospel, and exclusive of the Jewish Peo-

ple and Polity, yet the Custom in itself, notwithstanding its frequent Abuses, was not only innocent, but laudable, just, and reasonable. It seems founded indeed in that natural Notion of a superintending Providence, which, though variously and greatly obscured and corrupted in respect of its Agent or efficient Cause, was nevertheless in no Period of Time totally extinguished or obliterated from the Minds of Men. Taught by this Principle, they solicited the Inspiration and Direction of that superior Power and Wisdom, to determine them to the best and most prudent Choice of Men and Measures, of Governors, Magistrates, and Leaders, of Counsels, Resolutions, and Enterprizes, both warlike and pacific; knowing in the Sense, if not in the Words of Solomon, that “ though the Lot is cast “ into the Lap, yet the whole disposing thereof is of the “ Lord.”

It is no Wonder then, that Christianity, which is the Restorer and Improver of the true Religion of Nature, hath approved and adopted the Practice: Inasmuch as the Motives to it are greatly increased and enforced by our nobler and purer Notions of the Deity and full Conviction of the Existence of his infinite Wisdom and Goodness.

Conscious

Conscious and convinced, how much the Peace and Welfare of civil Society depended upon the Virtue and Wisdom of their Rulers and Governors, and in which were necessarily involved her own Progress and Success, she (by St. Paul) enjoined her Disciples to “ lift up holy Hands everywhere,” even for idolatrous and persecuting Princes. Hence it is clear, that she came not to controul Mankind in their Choice of Government ; her sole Business, her peculiar Province was to compose and correct the Passions, and prepare Men for the future Enjoyment of the one true God by Repentance and Faith in a Saviour, whose Kingdom, by his own Declaration, was not of this World : With civil Matters she interfered no further than to pray for the Welfare both of the Governors and Governed ; that thus undisturbed and undiverted by War and Tumult, all Men might have Leisure to attend to her Doctrines, and Opportunity to come to the Knowledge of the Truth ; and at least, that those already converted might lead quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godliness and Honesty.

Upon her Establishment in, and Incorporation with the civil Constitutions of the converted Countries, this

Duty of praying for Magistrates at all Times, was reinforced by the Consideration of their being Fellow-Christians, and joint Heirs of a future heavenly Kingdom, that “shall know no End :” And then exchanging the secret “upper Chamber” for the more decent and solemn Temple, she there lifted up her Voice with Strength and Courage, for all that were put in Authority, that they might truly and impartially minister Justice, “to the Punishment of Wickedness and Vice, and to the Maintenance of true Religion and Virtue.” More particularly upon every important Occasion and Crisis, upon their Election into Office, and the Commencement of their Administration, did she attend with her Prayers and Intercessions to the Throne of Grace, knowing the Blindness of human Wisdom, and the Hazard of human Choice ; she therefore implored the divine Influence and Interposition to enlighten the one, and direct the other to the best and happiest Issues.

But, to quit this figurative Style, the Piety and Prudence of invoking the divine Blessing upon our civil Governors of every Denomination, will more fully appear from considering the Nature and End of Magistracy and
Government

Government at large. I speak not here of Kingly Government, for that is foreign to the present Purpose, and highly offensive to the prevailing Temper of the Times; and indeed, St. Paul pays here no distinguishing Respect to Princes, but only mentions them, as one of many Kinds of Magistrates. I shall therefore confine myself to observe, that as Government of every Species was designed to enact Laws, without which civil Society could not subsist, so those Laws, to be occasionally and duly enforced and executed, must likewise delegate a Power to single, or more Officers or Ministers, according to the different Constitutions of each particular Society, from the largest to the narrowest Scale; for it is inconvenient, it is impracticable for the most popular Government to execute its own Laws. But now since the unruly Passions of Individuals, which no Penalties, either present or future, can effectually and totally subdue, require the frequent Enforcement and Execution of legal Restraints and Punishments, so to preserve the Peace and Property of Mankind in any tolerable Degree in every Community, either greater or less, Magistracy must be appointed and invested with adequate Authority and Power: And considering likewise the Difficulties which attend the Magistrate in the conscientious Discharge of his Duty, especially in
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jarring and tumultuous Times like the present, he stands in great Need of our effectual fervent Prayers, and indeed of our Assistance in every other Way, if it proceed merely from selfish Motives, and solely from a Regard to our own Peace and Welfare; which selfish View however, leading to social Ends and the general Good, we know is the only true Principle and Original of all delegated Authority, how much soever Men may differ about the Name, Extent, and Exercise of it. But moreover, as our own Tranquillity and Happiness, forming collectively that public Good, must depend greatly on the Countenance and Encouragement given to Morality, and the pure meek Spirit of the Gospel, which rather co-operate with, than militate against the Laws, so let us remember always to add to the former Motive, the superior and nobler Considerations of Virtue and Religion, the more strongly to induce us to pray for all that are in Authority, “ that we may
 “ lead quiet and peaceable Lives, in all Godliness and Ho-
 “ nesty, for these Things are good and profitable unto
 “ Men;” and “ this is acceptable to God our Saviour,
 “ and the Prince of Peace.”

But now, considering the Greatness of the Task, and the Abilities necessary to discharge the Office with Dignity

nity and Applause, here the usual, the obvious Question interrupts and interrogates us, Who is sufficient for these Things? Strictly speaking, and abstractedly from all adventitious Qualifications, few, if any of the human Race are equal to encounter all these Difficulties, and to fill the Chair of Judgement and Justice with perfect Capacity and unerring Wisdom. Wise Men know the Painfulness of Pre-eminence, of being set on high among the People, and placed in a stronger Point of View; and good Men, conscious of their Infirmities and Defects, would absolutely decline the Weight and Burden of Office, did not the Desire and Hope of doing Good, or preventing Evil to their Fellow-Citizens, overcome their Reluctance to appear in a public Character. The Love of our Country, and the Wish to serve it most extensively and effectually in the Line of Magistracy, is the noblest Passion of the human Heart; and this Consideration, added to the Love of Glory, which Nature has wisely implanted in us, to balance and conquer the Inclination for Quiet and Retirement, will lead both the Wise and Good from the Walk of private Life, to take chearfully their Share of public Duty, and earnestly and honestly to stand forth Candidates for public Approbation. Acting upon these Principles, such Men may demand not only our Prayers, that
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the good, the important Work may prosper in their Hands; but our grateful Acknowledgments and warmest Praises should be likewise superadded and readily allowed them.

It would be happy for Society, if we could always find such Men to invest with Authority: But in that Deficiency are verified the Words of Solomon. With him we may see under the Sun, “ that the Race is not to the “ swift, nor the Battle to the strong, neither yet Bread “ to the wise, nor yet Riches to Men of Understanding, “ nor yet Favour to Men of Skill, but Time and Chance “ happeneth to them all.” Under such Circumstances we must content ourselves with making the proper Provisions, that we may not suffer too much by the Preference we may give to Peace and Order, and the regular Course of Things, to which, upon the whole, I believe, it has been found most prudent to adhere, notwithstanding the Occasion and Necessity there may be sometimes to deviate and depart from the common beaten Track; to assert an almost forgotten Privilege, and to rouse the civil Body from its Indolence and Lethargy.

But since Dignity and Power do not always fall to the Lot of those, who would best become and exercise them,
what

what are we to do in this Case? Seriously, to do all, that in us lies to supply Defects, and to promote the Ease, and forward the Course of public Business. If all Power, be under God, derived from the People, their Delegates become respectable even by the Trust committed to their Charge; and however otherwise exceptionable they may be, the considerate Part of Mankind will not, from a Respect to themselves, despise the Work of their own Hands. To speak Evil of Dignities in such Cases, only tends to increase our Difficulties, by bringing Power into Contempt, and abating the Force and Terror of the Law; the necessary Consequence of which would be Confusion and Perplexity, Disorder, Anarchy, and universal Fraud and Violence. If therefore the Government of any Society should unhappily rest upon the Shoulder that is too weak to sustain it, let us for our own Sakes strengthen it, and support the Feeble-minded. The Laws have happily in our Case fixed Bounds to the Unruly, either by sufficient Restraints, or the certain and annual Period assigned to their Administration. And as the Fear of public Resentment and Displeasure has sometimes operated upon Minds, that were insensible to more noble and generous Motives, so, upon the whole, I think we may rest satisfied of having

Justice done us, or being soon relieved from any temporary Encroachments and Oppression.

There is one infallible Method however, by which we may improve the best civil Administration, or make the worst tolerable and comfortable; and that is, to lead godly and peaceable Lives ourselves, “whether our Superiors will hear, or whether they will forbear.” Piety, Meekness, and Temperance, seldom give the Guardians of the Laws any Trouble; “for where there is no Transgression, there is no Law;” no Necessity at least to put it into Force. The more then those Virtues and Graces are cultivated and observed in our Lives and Conversations, the good Magistrate will experience less Difficulty in the Execution of his Office; and, if there ever should be such an one, the weak and vicious find fewer Opportunities to betray his Folly and exercise his Tyranny: One Thing at least is clear and certain, the Favour and Blessing of Almighty God will attend this great City, if happily reforming their Morals, there be “many righteous found in it.”

And it is thus only, that we shall be enabled and encouraged to offer up our Prayers to the God of all Mercy with the greater Consistency, and the more reasonable Expectation

tion of being heard. “ The Eyes of the Lord are over
 “ the Righteous, and his Ears are open to their Prayers.”
 —It is indeed high Time to have Recourse to the Preva-
 lence and Efficacy of Prayer and Penitence, when we
 are told both at Home and Abroad, in a Language like
 that of Sennacherib’s Messengers, that “ we have neither
 “ Counfel nor Strength for the War.”—Be this as it may,
 for it does not become me to determine the Point, but to
 hope and to pray for the best: This I know, that whe-
 ther we are a desperate and ruined People, or may still
 entertain the Hopes of future Triumphs, and returning
 Glory (and may those Hopes be quickly realized!) Prayer
 and Penitence are the only Way we have left to ensure
 Success, and to avert fresh Evils; or, at least, to diminish
 that Blow, which may otherwise overwhelm us with De-
 struction. But, perhaps, Devotion and Repentance may,
 with Jacob, “ have Power with God,” and the Consequence
 will be still the same, that we shall have Power with Men
 also: And then, “ if God be for us, who shall be against
 “ us?” Then in the resolute and triumphant Language of
 David, our Country may exclaim, “ though an Host of
 “ Men were laid against me, yet shall not my Heart be
 “ afraid; and though there rose up War against me, yet
 “ will I put my Trust in Him.” To preserve then this

humble Confidence, and procure these divine Succours; let us be persuaded, for the Sake of all that is dear to us, to abandon and renounce our most dangerous, because domestic Enemies, our Divisions and our Vices.

Suffer ye thus far the Word of Exhortation; beyond that Word I may not presume to proceed: It is indeed ill suited, and contrary to the peaceful Nature and sacred Design of this Place, to enter into political Discussions and Disputes; offensive both to Decency and Religion, they likewise answer no good End; but rather tend to irritate, than to convince Men, or reduce them to one Opinion: Only this I must observe, that the Clergy of every Denomination and Sect should keep to their Duty, which is, to preach the Gospel of Peace, not to sound the Trumpet of War; to cool and calm Men's Passions, not to provoke and inflame them still higher.

For the same Reason, I shall beg Leave to omit all personal Respect and Commendation, however warranted by Custom, or even recommended by the highest Desert. In the first Place, it is hardly possible to avoid giving Offence, however chaste and cautious the Encomiums may be: Favour and Friendship will think the Panegyric cold and
too.

too sparingly bestowed ; Party and Prejudice will esteem it all too much, and nauseate the fulsome Flattery. And indeed, as Judgment in this Case is your's, as you are to applaud or censure, the Power and Authority being both derived from you, and for its Improvement and Exercise to be accounted for to the same Supremacy and Tribunal, so not unto us, but unto yourselves be assigned the Office of praising or condemning the Conduct of your civil Rulers ; I only wish, what I hope, that you may never have Occasion to exercise your Privilege in the latter Instance. To that and every other good Wish for the Prosperity of this great Metropolis, let us add our constant Prayers and Intercessions for all Men : For all the Children of Adam, however divided in their present Interests, and wheresoever placed upon the Surface of the Globe. Charity should know no Limits ; but after providing for her own Household, look upon the whole human Race with the Eyes of maternal Affection.

Let us therefore, when we have duly implored, and by our Reformation in some Degree deserved the Protection of Providence, patiently abide always ; encouraged by the divine Promise, “ that the patient abiding of the “ Meek shall not perish for ever.” Let us then resign
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the Fate of this distracted Empire to the all-wise and gracious Disposal of God, either, if he sees fit to grant us the Thing, which, in the Language of Scripture, “ we
“ greatly long for,” namely, that the Members of it, which have been so unhappily severed, may rejoice in a speedy, permanent Re-union, even lasting as long as the Sun endureth ; ^{or} at least let us hope, that he will protect and save this the Parent State, and in due Time restore the jarring Nations to Unity, Peace, and Concord. In these Prayers and Wishes we may all unite, without incurring the Offence or Displeasure of any one Person, except those “ who are Enemies to Peace, whose Tongues
“ are Spears and Arrows, and whose Feet are swift to
“ shed Blood :” From such, God Lord, deliver us !

T H E E N D.



